

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2622

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PEKING 1871

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CH

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION WITH VICE FOREIGN MINISTER YU CHAN

1. FOLLOWING OCTOBER 28 SIGNING AT FOREIGN MINISTRY OF AGREEMENT ON CULTURAL RELICS EXHIBITION, I HAD OVER AN HOUR'S DISCUSSION WITH VICE FOREIGN MINISTER YU CHAN ON A NUMBER OF POLICY TOPICS. ALSO PRESENT ON THE CHINESE SIDE WERE WANG YEH-CH'U, DIRECTOR OF THE STATE ADMINISTRATIVE BUREAU OF MUSEUM AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS DATA (TO GIVE HIM THE TITLE THE MFA INFORMATION DEPARTMENT USED); TANG WEN-SHENG, IN HER ROLE AS DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE AMERICAN AND OCEANIAN DEPARTMENT; AND INFORMATION DEPARTMENT DEPUTY DIRECTOR YEN HUNG-LIANG.
2. BECAUSE THIS WAS THE FIRST MEETING WHICH ANY OFFICER OF THE LIAISON OFFICE HAS HAD WITH VICE MINISTER YU AND BECAUSE I BELIEVE THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN HIM AND NANCY TANG IS OF SOME INTEREST, I AM REPORTING OUR CONVERSATION RATHER FULLY.
3. I OPENED THE BUSINESS PART OF OUR TALK BY REFERRING TO THE SECRETARY'S VISITS TO THE SOVIET UNION AND INDIA. SINCE VICE MINISTER YU CARRIES A PARTICULAR BRIEF FOR USSR AFFAIRS, I MADE CLEAR TO HIM THAT DESPITE SOME DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE UNITED STATES POLITICAL SPECTRUM ON HOW BEST TO ACHIEVE DETENTE, THERE WAS VERY WIDESPREAD SUPPORT FOR THE POLICY IN THE UNITED STATES.

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4. IN REPLY, VICE MINISTER YU SAID HE WAS SURE THE UNITED STATES HAD NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE NATURE OF ITS OPPONENT, THE SOVIET UNION, AND ADDED THAT THE PRC HAD REASON TO BE VERY SUSPICIOUS OF THEM BECAUSE OF THEIR OWN PAST EXPERIENCE OF THE RUSSIANS. "THE SOVIETS HAVE ONE SPECIAL CHARACTERISTIC", HE SAID, "WHICH IS THAT THEY ALWAYS TRY TO GET SOMETHING FOR NOTHING, PARTICULARLY IN THE QUESTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS". IN THIS REGARD, THE SOVIETS HAVE GONE MUCH FARTHER THAN THEY SAID THEY WOULD, WHILE TALKING ALL THE TIME ABOUT DISARMAMENT, HE ADDED.

5. REFERRING TO MY EXPERIENCE WITH AMBASSADOR MALIK AT THE UNITED NATIONS, I REPLIED THAT I KNEW HOW DIFFICULT AND HOW SHARP THE RUSSIANS COULD BE. NEVERTHELESS, WE HAD ALWAYS SOUGHT, GENERALLY SUCCESSFULLY, TO KEEP OPEN THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION TO THE SOVIETS SO THAT WE COULD CONTINUE FRANK DISCUSSIONS DESPITE THE OFTEN DEEP AND SERIOUS DIFFERENCES THAT DIVIDED US. AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE KIND OF COMMUNICATION WHICH WE HAD COME TO REGARD AS NORMAL WITH THE SOVIETS, I DESCRIBED THE GREAT INTEREST WHICH SOVIET OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON HAD SHOWN IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WATERGATE AFFAIR, FREQUENTLY CALLING ON ME AS REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CHAIRMAN AND ALSO ON OFFICIALS OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

6. AT THIS POINT, NANCY TANG INTERJECTED THE FIRST OF SEVERAL COMMENTS WHICH SHE INTERPRETED INTO ENGLISH HERSELF RATHER THAN ALLOWING THE OTHER INTERPRETER PRESENT TO DO IT. "WE", SHE SAID, "ARE NOT REPEAT NOT INTERESTED IN WATERGATE, WE NEVER WERE, AND WE HAVE SPECIFICALLY TOLD YOU SO."

7. FOLLOWING UP ON THE SUBJECT OF WATERGATE, I SAID THAT AS A PERSONAL ACQUAINTANCE OF FORMER PRESIDENT NIXON, I VERY MUCH APPRECIATED THE COMMENTS WHICH THE CHINESE HAD CONVEYED BOTH OFFICIALLY AND PRIVATELY AT THE TIME OF THE RESIGNATION. THE CHINESE HAD THE FAIRNESS TO RECOGNIZE NIXON'S REAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS. I ADDED THAT I BELIEVE IN TIME NIXON WILL BE ACCORDED FULL CREDIT FOR THE VERY GREAT SUCCESSES OF HIS ADMINISTRATION, PARTICULARLY IN REOPENING CONTACTS WITH THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA.

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BEFORE LEAVING THE UNITED STATES, I ADDED, I HAD SPOKEN WITH FORMER PRESIDENT NIXON SEVERAL TIMES, AND HE TOLD ME HOW FORTUNATE I WAS TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY OF COMING TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA.

8. AT THIS POINT, I DESCRIBED MY APPROACH TO MY NEW ASSIGNMENT IN MUCH THE SAME TERMS I HAD USED THE WEEK BEFORE WITH THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF PROTOCOL. I SAID THAT

WITHOUT WISHING TO GO BEYOND WHAT SEEMED APPROPRIATE, I WANTED TO MEET AS MANY CHINESE OFFICIALS AS POSSIBLE AND TO HOLD FRANK AND CANDID DISCUSSIONS WITH THEM ON ALL SUBJECTS OF MUTUAL INTEREST, SINCE A WIDER EXCHANGE OF VIEWS COULD ONLY LEAD TO BETTER MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND A STRENGTHENING OF OUR RELATIONSHIP.

9. VICE MINISTER YU SAID HE AGREED WITH THIS VIEW AND THOUGHT THAT I WAS OFF TO A GOOD START BY SIGNING AN AGREEMENT WITH THE PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT IN MY VERY FIRST WEEK IN PEKING.

10. AT THIS POINT, NANCY TANG INTERRUPTED A SECOND TIME "THE VIABILITY OF A RELATIONSHIP CANNOT BE CALCULATED IN TERMS OF NUMBERS OF AGREEMENTS SIGNED ONLY", SHE SAID. "THE MERE SIGNING OF AN AGREEMENT DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT A SATISFACTORY RELATIONSHIP HAS BEEN FOUNDED. FOR INSTANCE, AN AGREEMENT HAS RECENTLY BEEN SIGNED IN MOSCOW WHICH SAYS THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF NUCLEAR WAR BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION IS REMOTE. BUT WHAT WE FIND INTERESTING IS THAT THE AGREEMENT DOES NOT ENTIRELY RULE OUT THIS POSSIBILITY".
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PEKING 1871

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11. "ON THE SUBJECT OF AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION", I CONTINUED, "I WISH TO EMPHASIZE THAT NOTHING IN OUR APPROACH IS DESIGNED TO COMPLICATE OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OR MAKE THINGS DIFFICULT FOR THE PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT NOR IS THERE ANY IMPLIED THREAT OF COLLUSION BETWEEN

THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIETS AGAINST CHINA. WE ARE
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THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO MEET ANY CHALLENGE TO OUR RELATIONSHIP
WITH CHINA POSED BY THE SOVIETS IN AN INTELLIGENT AND
STRONG WAY AND WILL NOT BE FORCED TO COMPROMISE OUR RELATION-
SHIP WITH THE PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT, WHICH WE CONSIDER TO BE
OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE. THE BASIC DIRECTION OF
AMERICAN POLICY TOWARDS CHINA AND THE DESIRE OF THE
AMERICAN PEOPLE FOR BETTER RELATIONS WITH CHINA REMAINS
THE SAME. MEANWHILE, THE CHINESE MAY BE ASSURED THAT US GOVERNMENT
WILL NOT BE CAJOLED INTO RELAXING OUR DEGREE OF VIGILANCE
OR COMPROMISING OUR PREPAREDNESS AGAINST ANY THREAT. WE
HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN HUNGARY AND CZECHOSLAVAKIA. BECAUSE WE DO
NOT INDULGE IN RHETORICAL FENCING DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE
IGNORE EXISTING DANGERS AND THE FACT THAT WE KEEP A HIGH
LEVEL OF AMERICAN FORCES IN EUROPE IS THE PROOF OF THAT."

12. "MY VIEW IS NOT NECESSARILY THE SAME AS YOURS", REPLIED
VICE MINISTER YU. "THE SOVIETS ARE NOT AS HONEST OR AS FRANK
AS YOU. (MY CHINESE SPEAKING ADVISERS TELL ME THAT THE WORD WHICH
THE VICE MINISTER USED -- LAO SHIH -- MIGHT BETTER BE
TRANSLATED AS "NAIVE".) IF THE SOVIETS SEEK DETENTE IT IS
SURE TO BE AT OUR EXPENSE AND AT YOURS AS WELL, BREZHNEV
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IS A SKILLFUL ACTOR AND GOOD AT CHEAP TRICKS LIKE KISSING,
EMBRACING, AND WEEPING, BUT WHAT GOES ON INSIDE HIS HEAD
IS SOMETHING ELSE. YOU MAY NOT WISH TO TREAT THE SOVIETS
AS ENEMIES, BUT THEY CLEARLY VIEW YOU AS THEIRS. THEIR
MILITARY FORCES DEPLOYED IN THE FAR EAST ARE AIMED AT YOU
AS WELL AS US. THEIR MILITARY MEN CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN
THEIR ARMED FORCES WHILE LEAVING DETENTE TO THE "POLITICIANS"
WHOME THEY DESPISE".

13. AT THIS POINT, NANCY TANG INTERJECTED A THIRD REMARK.
"IN THE PAST", SHE SAID, "AMERICAN LEADERS HAVE COME
TO CHINA AND HAVE STATED THAT THE UNITED STATES AND
THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA HAVE COMMON INTERESTS.
THE STRATEGIC MOVES WHICH THE US GOVERNMENT MIGHT MAKE
WERE DESIGNED TO GAIN TIME FOR ITS POLICY, THOSE LEADERS
ADDED. WE ASSUME THAT THIS IS STILL THE CASE."
NONE OF US UNDERSTOOD PRECISELY WHAT MISS TANG WAS GETTING
AT. AT THE CONCLUSION OF OUR EXCHANGES ON THE SOVIET UNION,
VICE MINISTER YU MADE NOISES AS IF TO TERMINATE THE INTERVIEW,
BUT I HAD ONE MORE TOPIC WHICH I WISHED TO MENTION. "IS INDIA
IN YOUR AREA OF IMMEDIATE JURISDICTION", I ASKED. "NOT
DIRECTLY", REPLIED THE VICE MINISTER, "BUT I AM INDIRECTLY
CONCERNED." "THERE IS A LARGE RESERVOIR OF POPULAR SENTIMENT IN
THE UNITED STATES IN FAVOR OF THE INDIANS", I SAID, "PARTICULARLY
IN INTELLECTUAL CIRCLES. NEVERTHELESS, THERE ARE MANY

OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS ON THE POLICY LEVEL BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT. THAT IS WHY OUR SECRETARY OF STATE HAS GONE TO INDIA IN ORDER TO RESUME A DIALOGUE CONCERNING THESE OUTSTANDING DIFFICULTIES. BUT, IT WOULD BE PREMATURE TO SUPPOSE THAT WE CAN REACH ANY QUICK OR EASY SOLUTION. DO YOU BELIEVE", I ASKED, "THAT THE SOVIETS CONTINUE THEIR POLICY OF PUSHING INTO INDIA?"

14. "WE DO BELIEVE THAT IS THE RUSSIAN POLICY", ANSWERED THE VICE MINISTER,"AND HAS BEEN EVER SINCE THE DAYS OF THE CZARS. THE RUSSIANS ARE OBSTINATE AND WILL CARRY THROUGH THIS POLICY IF THEY CAN. THE WARMTH WHICH THE INDIANS FEEL FOR THE SOVIETS HAS BEEN ON THE DECLINE RECENTLY, HOWEVER, FOR THE SOVIETS ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO SOLVE INDIA'S FOOD PROBLEMS. IT IS THEREFORE AN OPPORTUNE TIME FOR DR. KISSINGER TO VISIT INDIA, AND WE HOPE WE WILL
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ACHIEVE SOMETHING. THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT HAS NO OBJECTION AT ALL TO YOUR SECRETARY OF STATE'S VISIT TO INDIA BUT WE HOPE YOU WILL REASSURE PAKISTAN OF YOUR INTENTIONS. THE INDIANS ARE A POOR NATION", HE CONCLUDED, "BUT THEY CAN BE VERY ARROGANT".

15. ON THIS NOTE, OUR CONVERSATION ENDED. I THANKED THE VICE MINISTER FOR HIS TIME AND ATTENTION.

16. COMMENT: VICE MINISTER YU CHAN SEEMED GENERALLY SELF-ASSURED,ESPECIALLY WHILE DISCUSSING THE SOVIET UNION. HIS EYES SHIFTED CONSTANTLY, HOWEVER, IN THE DIRECTION OF NANCY TANG, AS THOUGH TO CHECK WITH HER TO SEE IF HE WAS TAKING THE CORRECT LINE. MISS TANG FOR HER PART DID NOT HESITATE TO ENTER THE CONVERSATION, SOMETIMES TO CORRECT THE INTERPRETER, BUT IN THE THREE INSTANCES DESCRIBED ABOVE WITH THE CLEAR INTENTION OF MAKING A SIGNIFICANT STATEMENT IN HER OWN RIGHT. HER DEMEANOR TOWARD THE VICE MINISTER WAS POLITE AND CORRECT, BUT NOT REALLY DEFERENTIAL. MISS TANG SAW US TO THE DOOR.
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